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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at Miami-Dade Community College (MDCC) to provide data on the basic skills performance of first-time-in-college students who graduated from area public high schools between August 1982 and September 1983 and enrolled at MDCC in fall 1983. The entering basic skills performance of students who graduated in the top 20% of their high school class was considered separately from the performance of students who were below the 80th percentile, thereby allowing for direct school-to-school comparisons. Study findings included the following: (1) the overall percentage of graduates enrolled from any given high school fluctuated considerably from school to school; (2) MDCC attracted 23.11% of the top 20% group and 27.95% of the remaining students; (3) of the 3,337 first-time-in-college students who were Dade County Public School graduates, 94% were assessed with the Comparative Guidance and Placement (CGP) self-scoring tests in Reading, Written English Expression, and Computation; (4) for 13 schools, at least one out of every four top 20% graduates did not pass the CGP Reading test; (5) there were only five schools where fewer than 75% of the graduates scored above the developmental placement score in writing; and (6) at least one out of four students in the top 20% group from 15 of the high schools needed developmental coursework, while more than half of the bottom 80% group from every high school except one needed developmental coursework. (EJV)

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PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES ON THE COMPARATIVE GUIDANCE AND PLACEMENT TEST FOR BASIC SKILLS ASSESSMENT FALL TERM 1983

Research Report No. 84-05

February 1984

Institutional Research

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Miami-Dade Community College

PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES ON THE COMPARATIVE GUIDANCE AND PLACEMENT TEST FOR BASIC SKILLS ASSESSMENT FALL TERM 1983

Research Report No. 84-05

February 1984

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OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

This report examines the basic skills performance of first-time-in-college students who graduated from area public high schools. Performance of top 20% graduates is analyzed separately from that of bottom 80% graduates to allow direct school-to-school comparisons while controlling for differential draw of high achieving versus other graduates. Results indicate that high school graduates performed best on the Computation test, followed by the Written English Expression test and the Reading test, respectively. In general, top 20% graduates out-performed bottom 80% graduates as expected, but even among the top 20% group at least one out of four students from 15 high schools needed some developmental course work (did not pass all three tests). Results will be used as a baseline for comparison in future years.

Performance of Public High School Graduates
On the Comparative Guidance and Placement Test
For Basic Skills Assessment
Fall Term 1983

INTRODUCTION

The focus on quality education in Florida is part of a larger concern that students are not being prepared for the demands of an information age. According to Miami-Dade Community College President Robert H. McCabe, "It is ever more clear that information skills -- finding information, reading it, analyzing it, interpreting it, applying it, and communicating it -- are the foundation for living effectively and being employed productively in the information age" (McCabe, 1983). A survey by the College Board indicates that businesses are interested in the same skills for beginning employees as colleges are interested in for entering students.

Florida has addressed the problem of underprepared students with mandates for increased testing and for curriculum change. The State Student Assessment Test (functional literacy test) is required for graduating high school seniors, and a sophomore exit test (College Level Academic Skills Test) is in place at the post-secondary level. The implementation of a statewide placement test with uniform placement criteria for entering college students now seems imminent. Finally, the State Board of Education has mandated increased writing requirements.

The likely impact of testing hurdles on student attrition has been discussed elsewhere (Losak and Morris, 1983). The impact on curriculum is now beginning to occur. Educators are revising both high school and college curriculums, and are taking a more directive approach toward course selection. Locally, Miami-Dade Community College is now requiring writing and increased reading in all courses, and is raising its expectations for graduation. Similar efforts are underway in the Dade County Public Schools. The task is, of course, a difficult one given the almost tri-ethnic mix in Dade County.

However difficult the task, changes in directiveness and in curriculum content appear necessary if students are to succeed in college. Dr. McCabe states that, "High school students should take an academically rigorous curriculum regardless of stated occupation or college goals" (McCabe, 1984). This statement is supported by several different research findings. The results of a survey of local public high school students conducted in May of 1980 (Schwartz, 1982) indicated that nine out of ten students reported plans to enroll in college, but only half said that they were taking college preparatory courses. The author concluded that if these students "are truly college-bound, it would appear that a large group of them have not taken the appropriate curriculum ...."

This conclusion was further supported by findings from two surveys conducted at Miami-Dade Community College in the Fall of 1981 and the Fall of 1982. Students in developmental classes were asked to comment on their high school preparation. Results of the first survey (Losak, Schwartz, and Morris, 1982) indicated that students thought too little was expected of them in high school, and that they were not directed into college preparatory courses. A transcript analysis confirmed the fact that many of these students who arrived at college needing developmental coursework had not taken college preparatory courses. The second survey (Morris and Losak, 1982) essentially replicated the findings of the first, but further asked whether the students who did not take college preparatory courses originally had any intention of going on to college. Surprisingly, the majority said that they <u>had</u> planned to go on to college, but that they were not directed into specific courses. In fact, 60% of the respondents who were now in developmental courses stated that they believed they were ready for college-level work when they graduated high school.

Whether or not we agree that tests are fair measures of prior curriculum content or of the ability to succeed in subsequent coursework, it is clear that the basic skills performance of public high school graduates entering Miami-Dade is an important indicator. Students who perform well on basic skills placement tests are more likely to be

retained and to eventually graduate from the College than those who do not (Losak, 1983; Losak, 1982).

The purpose of the present report is to provide data on the basic skills performance of first-time-in-college students who graduated from area public high schools between August of 1982 and September of 1983, and enrolled at the college in the Fall of 1983. Prior reports (Baldwin, 1982; Morris and Baldwin, 1981) presented rankings of high schools based upon the percent of their graduates who scored above the remedial placement cutoff on each basic skills test. These comparisons were flawed by the fact that there was no way to determine whether the level of high school achievement of students entering Miami-Dade from each school was essentially equal. Thus schools whose graduates showed poor basic skills performance (for example, Edison, Central, and Northwestern) were identified as well as schools whose graduates showed good basic skills performance (for example, Palmetto, Killian, and South Dade) without regard for the possibility that the college was attracting entirely different segments of the graduating class from each school.

The present report attempts to remedy this non-comparability of data by introducing a control for student level of achievement within high schools. Entering basic skills performance of students who graduated in the 80th percentile or higher of their high school class (top 20%) is considered separately from the performance of students who were below the 80th percentile. This allows for direct school-to-school comparisons, and also will provide a basis for comparison of high school graduating classes across years.

METHOD

The data base consisted of all first-time-in-college students at Miami-Dade Community College who showed a high school graduation date between August, 1982 and September, 1983, and whose high school of origin was a Dade County public school. A printout of this data base was generated and compared with a printout of the top 20% of public high school seniors as of June, 1983, supplied by Dade County Public Schools (DCPS). Miami-Dade enrollees who also appeared on the high school printout were identified using name, address, and birthdate as the matching fields. These students were then identified on the full data base file. The file was then matched against the Test Master Record file and basic skills assessment scores were added. Thus the final data base consisted of all public high school graduates from the prior academic year who had entered Miami-Dade by the end of Fall Term 1983-84, their high school of origin, their placement test scores, and an indication of those students who were in the top 20% of their high school class.

The count of students on the DCPS top 20% printout did not in all cases equal 20% of the graduates from each school. This was due to the fact that students with errors on their records were excluded, as were students with imcompletes. In this sense, the public school data base was as "clean" as possible. Numerical references to the top 20% of graduates from each school thus refer to the number of students found in the DCPS data.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Patterns of High School Enrollment

Table 1 presents data on the number of high school graduates and Miami-Dade's draw of these graduates for the 1983-84 Fall Term. The area designations on the table correspond to those used by DCPS for the North (N), North Central (NC), South Central (SC), and South (S) areas of the county. Note that the overall percentage of graduates enrolled from any given high school fluctuates considerably from school-to-school. More than 30% of graduates from Southwest, Coral Park, Miami Springs, South Miami, Miami Senior, and Hialeah high schools enrolled at Miami-Dade during the Fall Term immediately following graduation. Conversely, fewer than 20% of graduates from Palmetto, Miami Beach, North Miami Beach, Northwestern, Norland, South Dade, and Edison high schools enrolled during the same time period. These differences in enrollment patterns mirror those found when high school draw is examined over a full academic year at Miami-Dade (Morris, 1984). The overall figure of 27.07% of graduates enrolled during the Fall Term may be compared to 34.7% enrolled when the prior graduating class was traced for one full year of enrollment at the College.

The center columns in Table 1 show the number of graduates on the DCPS printout who were at or above the 80th percentile in their high school graduating class (top 20%), and the number and percent who enrolled at Miami-Dade. Schools are sorted from low to high by the percent of this group who enrolled. The far right-hand column gives data for students below the 80th percentile in their high school graduating class. Overall, note that Miami-Dade attracted 23.11% of the top 20% group, and 27.95% of the remaining students. If we divide the table at the point where fewer than 25% of the top ranked high school graduates enrolled at Miami-Dade (dashed line) it is apparent that six out of seven North area schools fall below this line, as do four out of six South area schools. Thus the greatest proportional number of top 20% students come from North Central and South Central area schools.

Basic Skills Test Results

Tables 2 through 5 present data on the entering basic skills test performance of graduates from area public high schools. Of the 3,337 first-time-in-college students who were DCPS graduates, 3,133 (94%) were assessed with the Comparative Guidance and Placement (CGP) self-scoring tests in Reading, Written English Expression, and Computation. Data in the tables differentiate the top 20% students (left columns) from the remainder (right columns) and rank schools from low to high based on the proportion of top 20% students who scored above the cut for developmental placement (i.e., the percent who did not need developmental courses). Where fewer than five students were tested, the percents were deleted after the sorting (ranking) was accomplished.

Table 2 presents data for the Reading test. There is a considerable range in the proportion of top 20% students above the placement score -- from 21.4% of Edison graduates to 100% of North Miami and Homestead graduates. Overall, there has been little change in the location of schools in either the top or bottom half of the ranking compared to previous reports where standing in high school class was not considered (Baldwin, 1982; Morris and Baldwin, 1981). One notable exception is Jackson High School which shows 76.47% of students above the placement score compared to 31.3% in the earlier data (Baldwin, 1982). While there has been a clear improvement in the proportion of students above the placement score when only top 20% graduates are considered, it is still remarkable that for 13 schools at least one out of every four top 20% graduates did not pass the Reading test (i.e., fewer than 75% of the graduates passed).

Data for the bottom 80% high school graduates are presented in the right columns of Table 2. In general, the relative performance of this group mirrors the ranking based on the top 20% graduates, although a considerably lower proportion from each school scored above the developmental placement score.

Table 3 presents data for the Written English Expression (writing) test. In general, the performance of top 20% high school

graduates is much better than for the Reading test. There are only five schools where fewer than 75% of the graduates scored above the developmental placement score. Once again, the relative performance of the bottom 80% graduates mirrors that of the top 20%. The reader may note, however, that the bottom 80% graduates from Sunset, Killian, Palmetto, and Miami Beach high schools out-performed the top 20% graduates from Central, Edison, and Carol City high schools.

Table 4 presents data for the Computation test. The top 20% graduates (and the bottom 80% graduates) show their best performance on this test. Only two schools have fewer than 75% of the top 20% graduates above the developmental placement score. Note that the relative performance of the bottom 80% graduates does not mirror the performance of the top 20% as closely as was true for the other two tests. Bottom 80% graduates from Miami Springs, South Dade, and South Miami high schools out-performed those from Homestead, North Miami, and Hialeah Miami-Lakes high schools.

Table 5 presents data on the number and proportion of graduates from each high school who scored above the placement score on all three tests. Essentially this table answers the question of what proportion of students needed no developmental coursework. Data for the top 20% group indicate that at least one out of four students from 15 of the high schools needed developmental coursework. In fact, at least half of the top 20% graduates from eight of the schools needed developmental coursework. Data for the bottom 80% group is even less encouraging. More than half of the graduates from every high school except Killian needed developmental coursework (did not pass all three tests).

These baseline data will be used for comparison in future reports. It is hoped that curriculum changes underway in the high schools and a more directive approach to student course choice will result in improved basic skills performance of public high school graduates who enter Miami-Dade in the future. If you have any questions about this report, please contact Cathy Morris at 596-1238.

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Table 1

PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES FROM 1982-83
AND NUMBER ENROLLED AS OF CLOSING FALL 1983-1
BY STANDING IN HIGH SCHOOL CLASS

SCHOOL	AREA	NUMBER OF GRADS	ENROLLED M-DCC	PERCENT ENROLLED	TOP 20% OF GRADS	ENROLLED M-DCC	PERCENT ENROLLED	BOTTOM 80% OF GRADS	ENROLLED M-DCC	PERCENT ENROLLED
PALMETTO	S	651	130	19.97	104	1	0.96	547	129	23.58
MIAMI BEACH	N	345	65	18.84	52	1	1.92	293	64	21.84
NOR MIA BEACH	N	587	47	8.01	112	4	3.57	475	43	9.05
NORTHWESTERN	NC	378	33	8.73	53	3	5.66	325	30	9.23
NORTH MAIMI	N	497	107	21.53	87	11	12.64	410	96	23.41
KILLIAN	S	670	180	26.87	126	16	12.70	544	164	30.15
NORLAND	N	479	62	12.94	94	13	13.83	385	49	12.73
HOMESTEAD	S	315	63	20.00	58	10	17.24	257	53	20.62
SOUTH DADE	S	319	59	18.50	64	12	18.75	255	47	18.43
HIA-MIA LAKES	N	682	176	25.81	118	23	19.49	564	153	27.13
CORAL GABLES	SC	560	200	35.71	114	24	21.05	446	176	39.46
CAROL CITY	N	344	70	20.35	57	13	22.81	287	57	19.86
EDISON	NC	359	59	16.43	57	14	24.56	302	45	14.90
SUNSET	SC	755	278	36.82	119	31	26.05	636	247	38.84
CENTRAL	NC	410	86	20.98	81	22	27.16	329	64	19.45
SOUTHWEST	S	450	192	42.67	79	22	27.85	371	170	45.82
CORAL PARK	SC	730	285	39.04	137	39	28.47	593	246	41.48
SOUTHRIDGE	S	648	162	25.00	135	39	28.89	513	123	23.98
JACKSON	NC	394	95	24.11	65	19	29.23	329	76	23.10
MIAMI SPRINGS	NC	482	165	34.23	102	31	30.39	380	134	35.26
SOUTH MIAMI	SC	610	242	39.67	112	43	38.39	498	199	39.96
MIA SENIOR	SC	625	238	38.08	124	49	39.52	501	189	37.72
HIALEAH	NC	695	255	36.69	122	50	40.98	573	205	35.78
AMERICAN	N	342	88	25.73	65	27	41.54	277	61	22.02
TOTAL		12327	3337	27.07	2237	517	23.11	10090	2820	27.95

Table 2

PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES FROM 1982-83
ENROLLED AS OF CLOSING FALL 1983-1
PERFORMANCE ON BASIC SKILLS R E A D I N G TEST
BY STANDING IN HIGH SCHOOL CLASS

SCHOOL	AREA	TOP 20% ENROLLED AT M-DCC	NUMBER TESTED	PERCENT TESTED	PERCENT ABOVE CUT READING	BOTTOM 80% ENROLLED AT M-DCC	NUMBER TESTED	PERCENT TESTED	PERCENT ABOVE CUT READING
EDISON	NC	14	14	100.00	21.43	45	44	97.78	15.91
NORTHWESTERN	NC	3	3	100.00		30	29	96.67	17.24
CENTRAL	NC	22	20	90.91	40.00	64	61	95.31	13.11
MIA SENIOR	SC	49	49	100.00	53.06	189	171	90.48	30.99
AMERICAN	N	27	15	55.56	53.33	61	60	98.36	21.67
CAROL CITY	N	13	11	84.62	54.55	57	55	96.49	21.82
MIAMI SPRINGS	NC	31	24	77.42	62.50	134	124	92.54	39.52
HIALEAH	NC	50	38	76.00	63.16	205	199	97.07	37.69
SOUTH DADE	S	12	12	100.00	66.67	47	46	97.87	58.70
CORAL GABLES	SC	24	24	100.00	66.67	176	170	96.59	51.18
NORLAND	N	13	7	53.85	71.43	49	46	93.88	23.91
SOUTHWEST	S	22	21	95.45	71.43	170	165	97.06	57.58
HIA-MIA LAKES	N	23	19	82.61	73.68	153	140	91.50	45.71
CORAL PARK	SC	39	39	100.00	74.36	246	243	98.78	53.50
JACKSON	NC	19	17	89.47	76.47	76	70	92.11	25.71
SOUTH MIAMI	SC	43	41	95.35	82.93	199	188	94.47	51.60
SOUTHRIDGE	S	39	36	92.31	86.11	123	120	97.56	57.50
KILLIAN	S	16	15	93.75	86.67	164	161	98.17	70.81
SUNSET	SC	31	28	90.32	92.86	247	236	95.55	61.44
PALMETTO	S	1	1	100.00		129	116	89.92	68.10
MIAMI BEACH	N	1	1	100.00		64	58	90.63	58.62
NOR MIA BEACH	N	4	1	25.00		43	39	90.70	48.72
NORTH MAIMI	N	11	7	63.64	100.00	96	87	90.63	50.57
HOMESTEAD	S	10	10	100.00	100.00	53	52	98.11	50.00

Table 3
PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES FROM 1982-83
ENROLLED AS OF CLOSING FALL 1983-1
PERFORMANCE ON BASIC SKILLS WRITING TEST
BY STANDING IN HIGH SCHOOL CLASS

SCHOOL	AREA	TOP 20% ENROLLED AT M-DCC	NUMBER TESTED	PERCENT TESTED	PERCENT ABOVE CUT WRITING	BOTTOM 80% ENROLLED AT M-DCC	NUMBER TESTED	PERCENT TESTED	PERCENT ABOVE CUT WRITING
NORTHWESTERN	NC	3	3	100.00		30	29	96.67	20.69
CENTRAL	NC	22	20	90.91	45.00	64	61	95.31	21.31
EDISON	NC	14	14	100.00	57.14	45	44	97.78	25.00
CAROL CITY	N	13	11	84.62	63.64	57	55	96.49	36.36
MIA SENIOR	SC	49	49	100.00	71.43	189	171	90.48	42.69
AMERICAN	N	27	15	55.56	73.33	61	60	98.36	38.33
MIAMI SPRINGS	NC	31	24	77.42	75.00	134	124	92.54	42.74
HIALEAH	NC	50	38	76.00	76.32	205	199	97.07	51.76
CORAL GABLES	SC	24	24	100.00	79.17	176	170	96.59	55.88
JACKSON	NC	19	17	89.47	82.35	76	70	92.11	32.86
SOUTH DADE	S	12	12	100.00	83.33	47	46	97.87	58.70
MIA-MIA LAKES	N	23	19	82.61	84.21	153	140	91.50	51.43
SOUTH MIAMI	SC	43	41	95.35	85.37	199	188	94.47	60.64
NORLAND	N	13	7	53.85	85.71	49	46	93.88	36.96
SOUTHWEST	S	22	21	95.45	85.71	170	165	97.06	66.67
SUNSET	SC	31	28	90.32	85.71	247	236	95.55	71.19
NORTH MAIMI	N	11	7	63.64	85.71	96	87	90.63	58.62
SOUTHRIDGE	S	39	36	92.31	86.11	123	120	97.56	59.17
CORAL PARK	SC	39	39	100.00	92.31	246	243	98.78	59.67
KILLIAN	S	16	15	93.75	100.00	164	161	98.17	71.43
PALMETTO	S	1	1	100.00		129	116	89.92	73.28
MIAMI BEACH	N	1	1	100.00		64	58	90.63	70.69
NOR MIA BEACH	N	4	1	25.00		43	39	90.70	51.28
HOMESTEAD	S	10	10	100.00	100.00	53	52	98.11	55.77

Table 4

PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES FROM 1982-83
ENROLLED AS OF CLOSING FALL 1983-1
PERFORMANCE ON BASIC SKILLS COMPUTATION TEST
BY STANDING IN HIGH SCHOOL CLASS

SCHOOL	AREA	TOP 20% ENROLLED AT M-DCC	NUMBER TESTED	PERCENT TESTED	PERCENT ABOVE CUT COMPUTATION	BOTTOM 80% ENROLLED AT M-DCC	NUMBER TESTED	PERCENT TESTED	PERCENT ABOVE CUT COMPUTATION
MIAMI BEACH	N	1	1	100.00		64	58	90.63	75.86
AMERICAN	N	27	15	55.56	53.33	61	60	98.36	60.00
NORTHWESTERN	NC	3	3	100.00		30	29	96.67	41.38
EDISON	NC	14	14	100.00	71.43	45	44	97.78	43.18
CENTRAL	NC	22	20	90.91	75.00	64	61	95.31	44.26
MIAMI SPRINGS	NC	31	24	77.42	79.17	134	124	92.54	68.55
JACKSON	NC	19	17	89.47	82.35	76	70	92.11	37.14
CORAL GABLES	SC	24	24	100.00	83.33	176	170	96.59	54.12
SOUTH DADE	S	12	12	100.00	83.33	47	46	97.87	63.04
SOUTH MIAMI	SC	43	41	95.35	85.37	199	188	94.47	78.19
NORLAND	N	13	7	53.85	85.71	49	46	93.88	45.65
CORAL PARK	SC	39	39	100.00	87.18	246	243	98.78	71.60
MIA SENIOR	SC	49	49	100.00	89.80	189	171	90.48	62.57
CAROL CITY	N	13	11	84.62	90.91	57	55	96.49	65.45
HIALEAH	NC	50	38	76.00	92.11	205	199	97.07	65.33
SUNSET	SC	31	28	90.32	92.86	247	236	95.55	71.61
KILLIAN	S	16	15	93.75	93.33	164	161	98.17	83.85
MIA-MIA LAKES	N	23	19	82.61	94.74	153	140	91.50	59.29
SOUTHWEST	S	22	21	95.45	100.00	170	165	97.06	73.33
NORTH MIAMI	N	11	7	63.64	100.00	96	87	90.63	63.22
SOUTHRIDGE	S	39	36	92.31	100.00	123	120	97.56	70.00
PALMETTO	S	1	1	100.00		129	116	89.92	70.69
NOR MIA BEACH	N	4	1	25.00		43	39	90.70	56.41
HOMESTEAD	S	10	10	100.00	100.00	53	52	98.11	61.54

Table 5
PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES FROM 1982-83
ENROLLED AS OF CLOSING FALL 1983-1
PERCENT P A S S I N G A L L T H R E E TESTS
BY STANDING IN HIGH SCHOOL CLASS

SCHOOL	AREA	TOP 20% ENROLLED AT M-DCC	NUMBER TESTED	PERCENT PASSING ALL 3 TESTS	BOTTOM 80% ENROLLED AT M-DCC	NUMBER TESTED	PERCENT PASSING ALL 3 TESTS
MIAMI BEACH	N	1	1		64	58	44.83
NORTHWESTERN	NC	3	3		30	29	0.00
EDISON	NC	14	14	21.43	45	44	4.55
CENTRAL	NC	22	20	30.00	64	61	9.84
AMERICAN	N	27	15	40.00	61	60	15.00
MIAMI SPRINGS	NC	31	24	45.83	134	124	22.58
CORAL GABLES	SC	24	24	45.83	176	170	29.41
MIA SENIOR	SC	49	49	46.94	189	171	21.05
HIALEAH	NC	50	38	47.37	205	199	25.13
SOUTH DADE	S	12	12	50.00	47	46	32.61
CAROL CITY	N	13	11	54.55	57	55	18.18
CORAL PARK	SC	39	39	64.10	246	243	35.80
SOUTHWEST	S	22	21	66.67	170	165	42.42
SOUTH MIAMI	SC	43	41	68.29	199	188	37.23
MIA-MIA LAKES	N	23	19	68.42	153	140	28.57
JACKSON	NC	19	17	70.59	76	70	10.00
NORLAND	N	13	7	71.43	49	46	8.70
SUNSET	SC	31	28	78.57	247	236	43.64
KILLIAN	S	16	15	80.00	164	161	55.28
SOUTHRIDGE	S	39	36	80.56	123	120	40.83
NORTH MAIMI	N	11	7	85.71	96	87	32.18
PALMETTO	S	1	1		129	116	49.14
NOR MIA BEACH	N	4	1		43	39	30.77
HOMESTEAD	S	10	10	100.00	53	52	32.69

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